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*A Sketch of the Sacred History contained in the Books of Nehemiah and Esther, with Remarks on their Credibility and Inspiration.*

**T**O awaken in the minds of Israel a just sense of the great mercies which they had experienced in the signal blessings of divine Providence, Moses directs them, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." Nothing is better calculated to produce an impressive sense of the mercy and goodness of God, than a serious contemplation of the great things which he has done for us, and for our fathers, and for the church on earth in days that are past. It is for this reason that such a great part of the sacred Volume is taken up with history. There we may see God, in the events of his holy providence, manifesting his wisdom, his faithfulness, and his long-suffering grace. There we see the truth and the fulfilment of the divine promises, and the strongest pledge for the perform-

ance of those not yet accomplished.

In the present paper we shall pay some attention to the sacred historical Books, Nehemiah and Esther.

In the history of the church of God, the book of Nehemiah succeeds immediately the book of Ezra. The book of Ezra resumes the sacred history, at the conclusion of the books of Chronicles, which is the time of the termination of the captivity. The period of the seventy years captivity in Babylon is mostly passed over by the sacred writers. It was a time of gloom and despondency; Jerusalem was a desolate waste, the captives sat down to weep by the rivers of Babel, they were compelled to hear the taunting reproaches of their unfeeling enemies, upon the willows of the brook Zion's harps were hung, the moans of Judah prolonged the tedious day. This period, of course, was unproductive of important events, and we have few records of that gloomy interval, except what are contained in the book of Daniel and in the 137th psalm. At the conclu-

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sion of this period, commences the Book of Ezra, and extends through a term of almost eighty years. The book of Nehemiah then succeeds and continues the Scripture history almost forty-five years. This completes the regular series of history contained in the Old Testament. The events recorded in the book of Esther, as we shall hereafter show, took place previous to the time of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah, one of the illustrious characters of the Old Testament, was the son of Hachaliah, of the tribe of Judah. He was, undoubtedly, a descendant of some of the captives who were carried from Jerusalem to Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. During the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, he obtained a residence at the royal court; and by his extraordinary powers and brilliancy of mind, joined to a peculiar sweetness of temper, he rose to high favor, and became cup-bearer to the king. This was an office of great emolument and honor. While employed in this easy station, eminently distinguished with the royal bounty, and surrounded with all the pleasures of the magnificent court of Persia, he could not forget Jerusalem. Though it does not appear that he had ever seen that consecrated place, yet it was the land of his fathers, it was the chosen habitation of the God of Jacob; it was the place of the temple, and the daily sacrifice; it was the only place on earth where the God of heaven was truly known and publicly worshipped, according to his own appointment. With such feelings, he would naturally embrace every opportunity that offered to enquire concerning the much loved Jeru-

salem. On the arrival of certain Jews at Shushan, he made his earnest enquiry. He was told in reply, "The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province, are in great affliction and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire." The prophet adds, "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." He then addresses the Most High, in one of the most humble, fervent prayers, found on sacred record. He confesses his sins, and the sins of his people, acknowledges the justice of God in the execution of his judgments, pleads his mercy, pleads his covenant faithfulness, pleads his promises, and asks the divine favor while he would apply to the king of Persia for help. The duties of his office soon bring him into the presence of the king. A melancholy sadness overcast his countenance, which could not be concealed from the eye of his sovereign. The king said to him, "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Nehemiah pathetically replies, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire." The king demanded what was his request. After an ejaculatory prayer to God for direction, he desired that he might be sent to Jerusalem, with all who pleased to attend him, to rebuild the city. The king immediately gave him a very ample commission, appointed him governor of Judea, and granted all his request.

Nehemiah, with his companions, soon went up to Jerusalem, reviewed the state of the city, convened the elders of the Jews, informed them of the good things God had done for them, and gave thanks at the remembrance of his mercies. At once, he and all the people united with glad hearts to repair the walls, and restore the breaches of the city. Their enemies, in the adjacent provinces, used every effort to frustrate their design, and prevent the completion of the work. Such was their danger, and such the rage of their enemies, that Nehemiah was obliged to arm one half of the people for the common defence, while others labored in the work; and those that labored carried their swords by their side or a weapon of war in their hand. Yet, by the good hand of their God upon them, and by the united efforts of the people, the wall was soon completed, and the gates of the city were set up. While the enemies scoffed, Nehemiah prayed, and cast their cause wholly on the Lord. Thus, agreeably to the prophecy of Daniel, "the street" was "built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." After the re-erection of the walls and the public buildings of the city, the poorer class of the people complained to Nehemiah of their hard sufferings by the rapacity of their creditors. The poor had become indebted to the rich, they had lent them money on usury, the poor had mortgaged their houses and lands for security, many of them were now driven from their homes, and many were sold to slavery. The governor heard their complaints, assembled the nobles and rulers, and gave them a severe reproof. He demanded of them

whether those, whom God by his grace had delivered from the hands of the heathen, should now be enslaved by their brethren. He then appealed to his own conduct, and declared that he had taken no part of the salary allotted to the governor, but had performed his extensive services, entirely, at his own charge. Upon this, the nobles and rulers complied with his request, and the poor were released from all their debts.

Tranquillity having been, at length, established, by the extraordinary exertions and patriotism of the governor, a new scene succeeds, equally interesting and solemn. The nation are all convened at the great feast of tabernacles; Ezra the priest, having made a very careful collection of all the sacred books, brought forth the books of Moses and read, for several days successively, in the presence of all the people, till he had gone through the whole book of the divine law. With the most attentive solemnity, fear, and gratitude, the people hearkened to the words of God. They saw their exceeding departure from the divine precepts, and, by a general humiliation and repentance, turned to God.—After this, the governor collected great numbers of the people, who lived in country villages, and persuaded them to fix their residence at Jerusalem. In this way, private buildings, as well as public edifices were rebuilt, and the city was restored, in a great measure, to its ancient splendor.

Nehemiah, at his departure from the king of Persia, was obliged to promise to return after certain days. Accordingly, he now departed from Jerusalem, and returned to the royal court at



Shushan. During his absence, the people degenerated in their manners, and many of his ordinances were neglected. Being informed of this state of things, he obtained leave of king Artaxerxes once more to visit Jerusalem. It does not appear that he ever returned. As he still retained the office of governor, he continued to exert all his influence to reform the corruptions of his people, to reclaim them from their errors, to teach them the ordinances of God, to persuade them to observe his commandments. He caused the temple to be purified, the annual tribute for the divine law to be paid, the Sabbath to be sacredly observed, and the divine law to be faithfully taught. Finally, like Ezra, he caused all the Jews who had married strange wives, contrary to the law of Moses, to put them away, and return to the observance of the statutes of God.

In the book of Nehemiah, we have a list of the names of those who first returned from captivity with Zerubbabel, which is conformable to the one contained in the book of Ezra. It is also to be observed that, at the great reformation which was made when Nehemiah first came to Jerusalem, he and the people entered into a solemn covenant of repentance and obedience to God and severally set their seal to their covenant. The names of many that sealed are given in the tenth chapter.\*

We proceed to some remarks,

1. The portion of sacred histo-

\* It may be worthy of notice that the Fathers of New-England appear to have had the re-establishment of the Jewish state under Ezra and Nehemiah, constantly in view. In many things they endeavor-

ry contained in the book of Nehemiah, has every needful evidence of authenticity. It was written by Nehemiah, the illustrious governor of Judea, and one of the most eminent patriots of that or any other nation. He appears to have been eminently qualified for this important work. His learning and acquirements are very clearly discernible, but need no illustration when they had recommended him to such a distinguished place in the court of Persia. His piety and zeal for God, his fervent love to Jerusalem, his warm attachment to the interests of the church, his unshaken confidence in the promises, are scarcely equalled in any of the eminent saints of old.

The events recorded by Nehemiah are of a public nature, and the most of them passed under his immediate inspection. He writes with all the simplicity and all the feeling of a cotemporary writer, of one who is a principal actor in the scenes presented to view.

The portion of history contained in this book shows a remarkable fulfilment of the predictions of the inspired prophets. Moses and all the eminent prophets had denounced against Israel the certain judgments of God which would be the consequence of their disobedience and idolatry, and had assured them that, in his holy indignation, they would be given up to the oppression of their enemies, their city and temple would be destroyed, and they led captive to foreign lands. But they were also assured that when they should

be restored to imitate their great example. I would here mention one only. They, frequently, as individuals, as churches, and as colonies, most solemnly renewed their covenant with God.



return to the Lord God of their fathers, with repentance and obedience, the Lord would turn their captivity, restore them to the land of their inheritance, and enable them to rebuild their city and temple with joy. All this we have seen performed. While we look into the early prophets and see what to expect, we turn to Ezra and Nehemiah and find the faithful accomplishment of the divine promises.

The sacred history contained in the book of Nehemiah was early received, and has ever since been received and acknowledged by the Jews. This, like most other of the historical books of the Old Testament, gives no flattering account of the character of that people. They are here represented, soon after experiencing the extraordinary interpositions of heaven, in releasing them from captivity and re-establishing their favorite city, as relapsing into innumerable disorders, neglecting the worship and ordinances of God, and disregarding his most solemn precepts. They repent and reform at the exhortation of Nehemiah, but relapse immediately after his departure. With such an exhibition of their national character, they would never have received this book as true history, had it not been known that the narrative could not be controverted. It was published so near the time of the events recorded, that there could be no possible imposition with regard to the facts.

This portion of sacred history receives ample confirmation from the testimony of profane history. We are now within the limit of historic times. And very few events of moment are mentioned by any one historian which are

not confirmed by others. The history of no nation, of equal antiquity, excepting the Jews, is so well known as that of the Medo-Persian empire. We have it from their own writers, and from the illustrious historians who flourished during the time of that empire in the neighboring states of Greece. It began with Cyrus, and was overthrown by Alexander after a continuance of 205 years. The reign of every prince, with all the most important events under their respective governments, are clearly ascertained. It is unnecessary to enter into a comparison of particulars, and it will be sufficient to observe that the character of the court of Persia, the magnificence of the princes, the extent of the empire, the situation of the provinces, mentioned in the book of Nehemiah, are all confirmed and illustrated by those great historians who treat of the affairs of the Persian empire. It appears from this book, that, in the time of Nehemiah, Jerusalem became a populous and splendid city. Herodotus saw it about that time, and mentions it under the name of Cadytis. He says it "belongs to the Syrians of Palestine, and in my opinion is equal to Sardis." Sardis was at that time a very large and flourishing city in Asia Minor. Nehemiah mentions the twentieth and the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. It appears from other historians that this monarch reigned 41 years. The state of Jerusalem in the next ages, in the time of Alexander, and in the time of the Maccabees, entirely corresponds with the representation of the book of Nehemiah.

In looking at the internal evidence of authenticity afforded by this book, we shall find it more

satisfactory. The writer appears to be perfectly possessed of his subject, and writes with the fullest confidence in the verity of the narration. There is no attempt to procure an undue applause for himself, no effort to flatter his royal patron, no endeavour to palliate the faults or seek the favor of his countrymen. He often speaks of himself, and he does it with modesty, connected with a humble confidence in his own integrity. His fidelity to truth and to God carries him above every minor consideration.

2. This portion of sacred Scripture was written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. The exalted piety which appears in every part of this book seems to belong to one endued with the supernatural gifts of the divine Spirit. The God of Israel, guiding, and protecting, and chastizing, and forgiving, his redeemed people, here appears the same God who led his people by the hand of Moses and Aaron; the same who brought David from the sheep-cote and placed him on the throne; the same who was served and worshipped by all the ancient prophets and saints. The divine law, the promises and threatenings of God, all appear with the same solemn sanctions, in the same awful majesty, as when proclaimed on mount Sinai, as when repeated by Moses, as when celebrated by Samuel and David. The dignity of the narrative is worthy of the Spirit of God. Nervous, grave, concise, exhibiting the great truths of God and his providence with perspicuity, not for the gratification of literary curiosity, but for the instruction and support of his people. The purest moral truth is found in eve-

ry sentiment, and no expression is unworthy a divine authority.

WE will now take a concise view of the book of Esther.

By a very extraordinary train of events in the holy providence of God, Esther, who was a descendant of the captives of Judah that had been carried to Babylon, was raised to the exalted station of Queen of Persia. Possessed of unrivalled personal charms, and most eminent virtues, she obtained a great ascendancy over the mind of the king. Haman, a very corrupt minister of state, the chief favorite of the monarch, perceiving that Mordecai a Jew and near relation of the Queen, (though the connection was unknown,) would not pay him that reverence which his pride demanded, determined to destroy all the Jews in the empire. Such was his influence with the king that he obtained a royal mandate for this purpose. After a season of general humiliation, fasting, and prayer, of all the Jews, Esther went to the king and intreated that the order for the general massacre of all the people might be countermanded. Her request was granted, and Haman the enemy of the Jews was put to death. Mordecai was placed in the high office which had been held by Haman, and the government of the empire was principally in the hands of Mordecai and the Queen. The day which had been appointed for the universal massacre of the Jews, from which they were now preserved, was directed by Esther and Mordecai to be observed as a solemn anniversary festival of thanksgiving to God, and is, accordingly, observed by

the Jews, to this day.—We make a few remarks.

1. The events recorded in the Book of Esther, appear to have taken place a little before the time of Ezra. There is good reason to conclude that the king of Persia mentioned in this book was Artaxerxes Longimanus. He was more disposed to favor the Jews than any other of the Persian monarchs, as appears from the liberal commissions granted by him to Ezra and Nehemiah. The other monarchs of that empire, like all other people indeed, were no way inclined to favor the abused sons of Jacob, excepting Cyrus, who acknowledges that what he did was by an express command of God. Yet, in this monarch, there is a remarkable and uniform disposition to build up and aid that afflicted people. The only satisfactory reason that can be assigned for this disposition in him is the influence of the Queen. It is said expressly in the second chapter of Nehemiah, when the king granted the request which Nehemiah had made, "The king said unto me, (the Queen also sitting by him,)" which seems to imply that through her influence the favor was obtained. By the same influence, undoubtedly, Nehemiah was in such high favor at court. As the commission of Ezra was in the seventh year of the reign of the king, the elevation of Esther must have been but a little before that time.

In the book of Esther, the king is called Ahasuerus, by Ezra and Nehemiah and other writers he is called Artaxerxes. Ezra and Nehemiah wrote in the Chaldee dialect, and wrote the name as it was used in Persia. The name Ahasuerus appears to be adapted to the

Hebrew dialect, used by the ancient writers of the Jews. Nothing is more common than for different nations to speak and write the same name in a different manner.\*

2. Who was the writer of this book of Esther is not certainly known. The most probable is that it was Mordecai. He was eminently qualified for such a work, as appears from the office which he sustained, from his zeal and fidelity in the service of God, and from being an eye-witness of all the events here related.

3. The history contained in the book of Esther is true. Though these events are very extraordinary, they are very conformable to the character of eastern nations, and they are very like to many series of events that have taken place in the holy providence of God, for the protection and deliverance of his people. The solemn festival so long celebrated by the Jews, in commemoration of the events here recorded, would never have been received and so long observed by them, had not the events commemorated been known to have been true. In all countries, public festivals are considered the surest testimonials of

\* Any reader of the Scriptures may observe that the same name is frequently written differently in the Old and in the New Testaments. Isaiah is called in the New Testament Esaias; Jeremiah is called Jeremy; Hosea, Osee; Elijah, Elias, &c. The reason of this variation is, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, generally used in the time of the Apostles, was the Greek Version made by the Seventy. The names of the prophets and others taken from that Version are written according to the Greek idiom, which produces the variation that has taken place.



historic truths.—At the time this book was received by the Jews, all these transactions could have been most easily ascertained, for they were of a very recent nature; and no imposition could have been practised.

The testimonies of the Persian and Grecian historians confirm the narrative of the book of Esther. The first verse of the book states the Persian empire to extend from India to Ethiopia. It is well known that, in the reign of Artaxerxes, those were the limits of that empire. The situation of the Jews, scattered through all the provinces of the empire, is perfectly characteristic of that people, and what might have very naturally existed, at that distance of time from the captivity. The pomp, and corruption, and luxury, of the Persian court, the caprice and tyranny of the princes, the severity of punishments, the wealth of the provinces, are all perfectly agreeable to all the authentic histories of that empire.—These events are conformable to the sacred history of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and are, indeed, a very necessary illustration of those inspired books.

4. This book of Esther must have been written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It has been often observed that the name of God is not mentioned in the Book. But the most inattentive reader must perceive that the providence of God, the hand of God, the truth and faithfulness of God are constantly in view. These are scarcely less visible in the history of Esther, than in the history of Joseph. The great object constantly in view, in all the divine appointments related in this book, are

worthy of the power and goodness of the most High. It is the protection of his people, and the overthrow of the devices of their enemies, according to his holy promises. The signal interposition of his favor is in a time of extremity, in answer to the united humiliation and prayers of his people. The character of God is perfectly sustained, the great interests of Zion are ever in view, perfect moral truth is inculcated, and the people of God, of every succeeding age, are furnished with another remarkable series of events in his holy providence; for their instruction, their encouragement, and their everlasting support.—This book has ever been received as divine, by the church of God, by Christ and his Apostles; it is included by our Lord in the general term “Moses and the prophets,” and by the Apostle Paul, when he says “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

A few practical remarks might here be added with propriety, but these are reserved for another paper, which will consist of some general reflections on what has been offered on the sacred books which have now been the subject of examination, and on all the preceding books of the Old Testament which have been particularly considered in this series of Essays. Having thus gone through with the historical part of the Old Testament, our design will be completed.



THE Editors present to their readers the following extract from the Christian Observer, on account of the peculiar importance, in their view, of the subject discussed. They are aware that

some of the remarks may be more applicable to the state of religion in England than in this country. Most of the topics, however, which are so ably discussed in\* this piece have an intimate connection with the great cause of Christian truth and holiness. Although speculative Antinomianism may have no advocates here, the Editors have, for some time, been of opinion, that practical Christianity, by which they mean the government of the temper and the tongue, as well as the external deportment, is not enough attended to by many professing Christians. While they fully believe that men are to be justified by faith alone, they as fully believe that a hope built on a faith not attended with holiness is delusive.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

**T**HERE is a subject somewhat connected with a right view of the Moral Law, to which I conceive the attention of your readers may be advantageously drawn; I mean, a high and disproportionate kind of doctrinal sentiment, sometimes to be met with, which appears to me to err, not so much by any broad and positive departure from essential truth, as by a partial and intemperate exhibition of it. It wants the holy meekness, the just proportion, the wise use which the Scriptures uniformly inculcate, and in union with which the doctrines of the Gospel ought ever to be exhibited. I would willingly avoid the use of obnoxious terms; but I hardly know how better to describe by a single expression, the system of opinions I have in view, than by calling it, *a crude Calvinistic theology*.\* It cannot

\* The intelligent reader will discern, from a careful perusal of this piece, that the writer is a strict  
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be considered as either enthusiastic or antinomian, in the stronger sense of those words, but it partakes, I fear, not inconsiderably of both these evils. It is sometimes found to be adopted by persons, I most sincerely believe, of fervent and exemplary piety—men whom we cannot but love, and whom we should strive to imitate; but it more commonly infects the minds of the young, the ardent, and the inexperienced; honest perhaps in the main, but greedy of novelty, rash in decision, and eager in maintaining what they have once asserted. It is indeed the deep conviction that all error is unholy, and will surely, though perhaps insensibly, operate to the injury of the Christian's faith, and obedience, and joy, that has determined me to address you on the subject. I will not, however, dissemble the difficulty I feel in attempting it. To expose the faults of persons, whom I believe for the most part to be truly pious, is dangerous to one's own mind. It is not easy to do it in the spirit of meekness. It is not easy wholly to avoid the errors which lie on the opposite side. It is not

Calvinist. He cannot, therefore, by the phrase *a crude Calvinistic theology*, be supposed, in the least degree, to wish to bring a reproach upon Calvinism rightly understood. It is only against an abuse of the genuine doctrines of that distinguished luminary of the Church that he would guard his readers. The writings of Calvin, while they manifest that he had drank deeply of the fountain of doctrinal truth, evince, at the same time, that he was a strenuous advocate for the practical influence of divine truth; believing that without this, orthodoxy of sentiment and supposed spiritual views and feelings were of no avail.

*Ed. Con. Evan. Mag.*

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easy so to conduct yourself, that others may acknowledge and feel, that your motives are really upright. It is not easy to preserve your intentions uncontaminated with what is wrong. I think there is scarcely a worse temper of mind than that which can dwell with pleasure on the infirmities and mistakes of our brethren. At the same time we are, surely permitted to state with modesty and firmness, what we conceive to be a departure from the simplicity of Christ; especially where such a statement may be the means at once of vindicating the truth of God from the misrepresentation of adversaries, and of guarding the young Christian from adopting views, which, however plausible they may appear, will infallibly lead him from the purity and humility of the faith of Christ.

The sentiments which I am about to detail, I impute to no individual, nor any number of individuals, in their full extent. A tendency to them in very different degrees, may possibly exist, where the consequences of the whole system are little suspected. I merely state what I conceive to be plain and tangible errors. Those who are candid enough to read my statements with attention, and compare them with the Holy Scriptures, though they should differ with me in judgment in some particulars, will yet, I should hope, receive them with the same spirit of affection in which they are offered, and fervently implore the grace and teaching of the Holy Spirit, on their re-consideration of the points to which they relate. On the system itself, I must beg leave to speak strongly and decidedly. A regard to truth will not allow me to palliate here. I real-

ly believe, that no one thing is more calculated to check the reviving piety of our days, and to provoke the Almighty to withdraw from us the light of his countenance, than the high and unmeasured doctrinal sentiments to which I allude; and the spirit and conduct with which they are too generally combined. Such sentiments and views, "will eat as doth a canker." And it is the duty of every sober-minded Christian to enter his protest against the adoption and propagation of them.

The chief errors of this crude system, appear to me to be these.

1. A disproportionate statement of the doctrines of election, predestination, and the decrees of God.
2. The inculcation of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, to the exclusion of almost every other topic.
3. The omitting directly to address the ungodly, and to call them to faith and repentance.
4. An excessive endeavor to produce comfort in the minds of those who are considered as sincere Christians.
5. A merely slight and general explication of the duties of obedience.
6. An unscriptural and highly dangerous view of the doctrine of final perseverance.
7. An unsound and fanciful method of interpreting the Holy Scriptures.
8. A censorious and positive temper in pressing their sentiments on others, and in condemning those who decline to receive them.

1. The first point, then, is a *disproportionate statement of the doctrines of election, predestination, and the decrees of God.*—To the cautious and scriptural statement of these mysterious truths, I make no objection. I endeavor to do this myself on all occasions which appear to me suitable. I am per-



suaded they tend greatly to promote, as our Seventeenth Article expresses it, our joy, and love, and thankfulness, and obedience. But I can conceive few things more dangerous than the excessive and somewhat irreverent manner in which they are occasionally treated. I have sometimes heard language on these awful subjects, not only divested of all that deep humility which should mark every statement relating to them, but accompanied with a positiveness, and what appeared to me arrogance, which really made me tremble. In the holy Scriptures I see these doctrines stated occasionally only and briefly, to churches established in the faith, as the Ephesian, Colossian, and Thessalonian, or in the due and natural course of an argumentative exposition of the truth, as in the Epistle to the Romans. And I observe, that such doctrine is in every case brought forward, not in an abstract metaphysical way, but for some directly holy purpose. The general course of scriptural instruction does not proceed on the basis of these awful and mysterious truths, but on the plain and intelligible ground of God's revealed will to man, as a fallen indeed, but rational and accountable creature. I apprehend, that for one verse referring to the secret decrees of God, there are an hundred which stand on the broad foundation of man's responsibility and duty. When, therefore, I listen to sermons or conversations which perpetually insist on these points, familiarly adopt terms of very dubious meaning, and proceed throughout, not on the revealed will of God, but on his inscrutable purposes, I must be permitted to consider such a course as a deflection from the

right way, as at variance with the example, and opposed to the simplicity, of the unerring oracles of truth; and I must beg leave to inform all who may be but superficially acquainted with these subjects, that the great body of pious ministers and Christians in the church, and I believe also among the Dissenters, do most decidedly disapprove of such an injudicious mode of instruction, and are desirous of doing all they properly can to discountenance it, both by the declaration of their sentiments, and by their own practice.

2. The second topic is, *the inculcation of the doctrines of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, to the exclusion of almost every other topic.*—To “know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,” was the apostle's determination, as it must be ours. But the apostle's own conduct unquestionably shews that he comprehended in that brief definition a vast variety of topics subservient to his main design. And I conceive, we very inadequately fulfil the purport of the apostle's expression, if we content ourselves with a perpetual display of one or two points in the comprehensive doctrine of the Cross, to the neglect or exclusion of those numerous introductory or subordinate truths which are absolutely necessary to a just exposition, a clear understanding, and a profitable application of the whole subject. I know I ought to speak with caution, with peculiar caution, on this branch of our inquiry. The distinguishing character of our ministry, should be the doctrine of “reconciliation.” No other points should be so introduced, as to afford room to any *considerate* hearer to complain, that

"Christ crucified" is not the prominent figure on the canvas. But I cannot for a moment doubt that it is our bounden duty to insist also, on all those other scriptural truths which are necessary, in order to prepare the heart for receiving aright the doctrine of "Christ crucified;" and which serve to trace that doctrine out into its consequences, and to guard it against abuse and misapprehension. I must believe, while I have the Bible before me, that the being and attributes of God; the evidences of Christianity; the reasonableness and responsibility of man; the spirituality and obligation of the holy law of God, its awful sanction and eternal authority; the offices of conscience; the doctrine of repentance and conversion to God; the influences of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of regeneration; the effects of faith in purifying the heart and overcoming the world; the properties of gratitude, love, joy, and peace; the nature of prayer and communion with God; together with a variety of similar points, are essential, though subordinate, parts of that pregnant expression, "Jesus Christ and him crucified;" and are, like the shades or the grouping of the figures in a painting, absolutely necessary to the illustration of the main subject of the piece. In fact, it has often appeared to me (for I cannot be silent where I conceive truth to be concerned,) that a perpetual and somewhat wearisome repetition of a few topics, conveyed chiefly in certain current, but not very perspicuous, phrases, is a very inadequate way of giving instruction even on the exclusive points which are thus insisted on. The method pursued in the apos-

tolitic writings, is that to which I would ever adhere. There I observe simplicity and grandeur united in exhibiting the doctrine of a Saviour. There I see no unmeaning repetitions, no declamatory efforts; but the great and mysterious subject is unfolded in all its bearings; is accompanied with pressing exhortations to obedience; is relieved by all those numerous topics with which it stands connected; is placed in its just light, and guarded against the misapprehensions of the ignorant and licentious. When I compare with this method, the jejune theology of which I now complain, I do not for an instant doubt which is best calculated to inform the understanding, and to sway the heart.

3. A further branch of this system, is, *the omitting directly to address the unconverted, and to call them to repentance and faith.*—I am aware that some excellent persons would be unwilling to admit the truth of this observation. They imagine that they do preach to the impenitent. But in what way? Do they fully set before them, the offers of mercy in Christ Jesus, and urge them by every argument to accept of those offers? Do they explain the nature, and press upon them the duty, of true repentance? Do they address men as reasonable creatures, with the same earnestness and importunity on the subject of religion, as they would on any point which affected their temporal interests? Do they employ the doctrine of the fall of man, and of his consequent inability to do any thing spiritually good, as the means of exciting him to pray to God for those sacred influences of his Spirit by which alone he

can be enabled sincerely to repent and believe the Gospel? Do they display to their hearers the willingness of God to bestow his Holy Spirit on them that ask him, as an inducement to enter seriously on the work of religion? Do they unfold the holy law of God, for the purpose of leading them to form just views of their own character, and of their need of repentance and faith? Do they thus "commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God?" I fear, that by the persons who have imbibed the general views I am now considering, few, if any, of these points are attended to, except in a very slight and cursory manner; and that they not only in practice omit all direct addresses to the ungodly, but in theory condemn such exhortations as unscriptural. They are, without doubt, glad that the unconverted should hear their sermons on the grace and love of Christ; they judge it expedient to denounce upon them the awful sentence of the violated law; they will offer up sincere and fervent prayers for their salvation; but they do not, at least they do not frequently and fully, entreat men, with St. Paul, "to be reconciled to God;" they do not directly exhort men, as St. Peter did Simon Magus, "to repent of their wickedness;" they do not in their Master's name "command" men to "repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;" they do not call on men to "strive to enter in at the strait gate;" they do not say, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." I cannot imagine a more material defect than this, in the discharge of the high office of "the minis-

try of reconciliation;"—a ministry which has for its design, its principal design, to treat with rebel man, with a view to his return to God in Christ Jesus. I consider this as a most important and even vital question. If this fatal misapprehension should unhappily spread, the effects will soon become too visible in the state of our families, and our parishes. Surely, if there be any one point, which more clearly than another may be inferred from the obvious and uniform tenor of the holy Scripture, it is this; that man, though a fallen creature, is to be addressed directly and importunately on all the high duties of religion. The whole Bible is hortatory. And those who so expound the truths which relate to the inability of man, and the power of Divine grace, as to lead them to relax in their efforts to arouse and alarm impenitent sinners, and to entreat and urge them to fly for refuge to the hope of mercy in Christ Jesus, appear to me greatly to misunderstand the whole subject. How such ministers can flatter themselves that they shall escape the doom of the unfaithful watchman, (Ezek. xxxiii. 7—9.) I know not.

4. The fourth particular I mentioned was, *an excessive endeavor to produce comfort in the minds of those who are considered as sincere Christians.*—That consolation is a most important part of the effect which Christian doctrine ought to produce, I most readily admit. The character of our Lord was eminent for tenderness. The spirit of St. Paul was as compassionate as it was elevated. The Comforter, is the distinguishing name of the blessed Spirit of God. But I object to



the theology which I am now reviewing, that it aims to administer comfort in what appears to me an unsafe and unscriptural manner. Its tendency is, to make joy and confidence the almost exclusive test of a right state of mind. It proposes topics for consolation far too indiscriminately, and often to many, very many persons, who are least of all entitled to consolation. It appears to forget, that there are occasions when contrition and sorrow should penetrate the heart. The consequence is, that that species of instruction which would lead to a careful scrutiny of the heart and life, is almost entirely overlooked, and the whole system seems framed for producing ease of mind at almost any rate. A cautious train of scriptural evidence with respect to our state and character, is but little inculcated, and the perpetual endeavor seems to be to excite joy, by excluding topics of anxiety, and by violently urging on the attention, the promises and privileges of true Christians. This method, I cannot consider as either wise or necessary. Comfort thus injudiciously administered, is like a cordial, which may for a time exhilarate the spirits, but which infallibly injures the general habit, and prepares the way for proportionate depression. True and abiding peace is of another character, more slow in its growth, indeed, but more valuable in its properties, and more holy in its effects. It is like health in the natural body, which may be considered as the effect which arises from every part of the frame regularly discharging its proper functions, and not as the disorderly and fitful produce of a stimulating application. If, indeed, all those

to whom sources of consolation are thus perpetually proposed were humble, watchful, and obedient believers in the Son of God, my present objection would have less weight; but when we recollect that these consolatory topics are most eagerly received by the young, the worldly-minded, the inconstant, the disobedient, the presumptuous, I may leave it to your reflecting readers to judge of the mischief which must follow. I have been much grieved to hear the language which private Christians as well as ministers occasionally use, in their endeavors to comfort those whom they admit to have committed great sins. But I will not trust myself to speak on this subject. I hope I may have mistaken their meaning.

I shall have said enough on this branch of my enquiry, if I am distinctly understood to object, not to topics of consolation when soberly treated, nor even to strenuous and animated endeavors to cheer the fainting Christian, when circumstances appear to require them, but to the perpetual and indiscriminate effort to produce consolation, and confidence, and joy in almost every variety of character and situation.

5. I come now to the fifth point which I have laid down—a *merely slight and general explication of the duties of obedience*.—Those whose minds are tinged with the errors I have detailed, uniformly fail here. I do not charge them with *directly* denying the obligation of the moral law on Christians as a rule of life. I do not charge them with *intentionally* separating the holiness of the Gospel from its privileges. I believe they are free from these serious imputations. I know, in many cases, that an eminently holy sympathy

is propagated by their instructions both in public and private. They feel the purifying tendency of the doctrines they love in their own hearts, and wish to promote that tendency on the hearts of others. The defect in their system appears to be this, that they do not follow the Scripture into the detail of Christian duties. They are satisfied with general and very partial views of sanctification. They do not insist on the regulation of the temper, and the government of the passions. They do not descend, with the apostle, to the special duties of every relation of life, and enforce on the husband and wife, the father and child, the master and servant, the governor and subject, the appropriate injunctions of the sacred Scriptures. The practical part of the Bible is a field which they do not cultivate. The consequence is, that the understandings of many Christians are not adequately informed on these subjects, nor their consciences directed. I need not say what must, in spite of the best principles and feelings, be the effects on their tempers and lives. It has always appeared to me, that if a minister is to amplify the doctrinal parts of the word of God, he is likewise to unfold the practical: that if he bestow five or six sermons on each of the three first chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians, he should bestow as many on each of the three last: that if it be God's appointed means of producing faith and love to expound the one, it is equally his appointed means of producing holy obedience to enforce the other. I am aware that it is far more difficult to compose a sermon on a particular topic of duty, sincerity for instance, or the forgiveness of inju-

ries, than on the general doctrines of the grace of God; nor am I ignorant, that such discourses would be considered by the disciples of the school on which I am now animadverting, as dry and legal; but surely, these considerations should have no weight with any one, who remembers aright, that, "if he yet pleases men, he is not the servant of Christ." The case is, in my view, so perfectly plain, that it is unnecessary to say another word upon it.

6. I pass on to the next point on which I am to touch—an *unscriptural and highly dangerous view of the doctrine of final perseverance*.—This language is strong, but I think not stronger than the occasion requires. The doctrine of final perseverance I am inclined to believe, not because I find it very broadly laid down in the holy Scriptures, but because I am of opinion that it may be fairly deduced from the declarations and promises of the Gospel; from the tenor of the covenant of grace; from the examples of the saints in holy writ; and from the whole scheme and bearing of Divine truth. I know, Mr. Editor, that you profess to stand on neutral ground on this and one or two other topics on which I have expressed my sentiments in this paper; and I trust, any language I may use will not be considered as at all entrenching on the general principles of your work. I must be permitted, then to concede to the persons whose system I am now considering, the truth of this doctrine. But is it, therefore, to be perpetually and rashly propounded? Is it to be abstractedly and coldly assumed as an axiom? Is it to be stripped of all the circumstances in which it is

clothed in the holy Scriptures, and taken out, naked and unguarded, to be exposed to the gaze of every beholder? Is there any one doctrine of the Bible which may not become suspicious and even dangerous, if it be separated from all the other doctrines with which it stands connected? I must confess, that I think immense mischief will be done, if the crude and intemperate views of this doctrine, which I know are taken by some very pious persons, should, unhappily, gain ground. To hear such unwarranted and unqualified declarations as these: "One spark of grace can never be lost;" "if we once believe, we are safe for eternity;" "God may leave his people to fall foully." (I use the terms I have myself heard adopted,) "but not finally;" "however far you may depart from God, you will be brought back again;" is something more than indefensible: it is, in my judgment, perfectly frightful. Such statements appear entirely to overlook the important consideration, that even supposing each of them to be in itself true, their just use is connected with the previous question, whether we are really believers in Christ; and that this question involves an investigation of our whole character and conduct. What then can be more pernicious than a perpetual detail of propositions, easily remembered and greedily retained, which are dependent for their truth on many most important and difficult antecedent enquiries; especially if, whilst these apothegms are familiarly, and even sometimes, as I think, flippantly uttered, much of the cautionary and alarming language of Scripture is either whol-

ly omitted, or feebly enforced? Surely, a scriptural view of this doctrine must be consistent with all the other parts of the Sacred Volume from which it is deduced. Surely every warning, every threatening, all the exhortations to watchfulness, all the denunciations on those who draw back unto perdition, all the dangers from the world and the flesh, all the details of the Christian conflict, all the fearful examples of those who have departed from the faith, are as much to find a place in our instructions, as those particular promises on which the hope of our perseverance rests. Without this, it is easy to see that the complexion of the doctrine, as it stands in the holy Scripture, may be totally different from what it is as exhibited by its interpreter. This will appear in a stronger light if we consider that it is by salutary fear, holy self distrust, eager vigilance, continual self-examination, and by the influence of all those principles which are calculated to move a creature like man in a state of probation, that it pleases God to accomplish his own purposes in the salvation of his faithful people. To omit, therefore, the means, whilst we hurry on to the end, is as I conceive, a presumptuous tempting of God. It is proceeding on the fatal mistake of first taking for granted what the secret will of God is, and then acting on that assumption to the neglect at least to the comparative neglect, of those means by which alone God brings man to final salvation. The scriptural method appears to me to be, to encourage, as occasion may require, the humble and diligent Christian in his conflict by the cheering promises of God; to animate him to persevering efforts



by the hope of protection and deliverance ; and to fill his mind with admiring gratitude and fervent devotedness, by elevated views of the condescension and faithfulness of his Redeemer in the covenant of grace. There are some judicious remarks on this subject, in Mr. Simeon's preface to his " Helps to Composition ;" to which I refer your readers, whilst I proceed to consider,

7. The seventh error which I have stated as attaching to this system—an *unsound and fanciful method of interpreting the holy Scriptures*. I am very far from intending by this the occasional mistakes which the most studious and humble Christian may commit, but that systematic mode of exposition which characterizes the ministry of those who adopt the sentiments I have been considering, and which appears to me to proceed from a disregard of the just rules of interpretation, a shrinking from diligent study, a passion for new or strange glosses, and an eagerness to engage every passage which is capable of subverting this purpose. in the support of some favorable sentiment. Thus, in various degrees, and; I firmly believe undesignedly as to many truly pious persons, the whole Scripture is made to yield to the rude hand of the expositor, instead of being taken in its obvious meaning, considered in connection with its several parts, and allowed to instruct him authoritatively in the truths of the Gospel. This error lies at the foundation of all the peculiar views of the divines who are now under our consideration, and either occasions or confirms their chief departures from the simplicity of the faith. In this way, the typical parts of

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the Old Testament are not explained as the Apostle has given us the example, in their grand and leading features, but pursued out to the most minute and dubious ramifications. The historical writings, instead of being expounded for the purposes which their obvious meaning would point out, are wrested to a fanciful system of metaphorical accommodation. The Book of Psalms, in like manner, is considered, however violently, to be descriptive in all its parts, of the person and work of the Saviour. The parables of our Lord in the New Testament are likewise not permitted to convey the simple and beautiful instruction, which the explications of our Lord himself, or the circumstances in which they were delivered, usually furnish, but are compelled to yield to a new and unnatural process. Nor is this all ; idiomatic language is sometimes utterly disregarded. The distinction between expressions found in a calm narrative, and a rapturous strain of poetry, is overlooked. A similarity in the mere sound of words is caught at : an incidental allusion in a sentence is dwelt on, to the neglect of the main subject. The evident tone and spirit of different passages is but slightly considered. Plain portions of Scripture are seldom selected as texts, at least are not so often taken, as those which afford room for a fanciful discussion. In a word, where this part of the system has been *fully* imbibed, which I sincerely believe is in very few cases, it is perfectly astonishing to observe the wild and unfounded expositions of holy writ which have been seriously contended for. I am not here objecting to a just exposition of the

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types and prophecies of the Old Testament, or to the most spiritual and comprehensive view of the instructions delivered by our Lord and his apostles in the New : but I do decidedly object to an incoherent and extravagant perversion of plain passages. I do think that a sober interpretation of the word of God is the least mark of gratitude we can pay for the inestimable blessing. I do conceive, that to frame to ourselves any system of religion which does not allow every part of the Bible to retain its due place, is dangerous and indefensible. And I must be allowed to protest in the most solemn manner against the use of arts, which all unite to condemn in the Papist or the Socinian, and which ought equally to be dreaded in whatever ranks the innovation may choose to appear.

8. The eighth and last point which I consider as characteristic of the theologians I am considering, is, a censorious and positive temper in pressing their sentiments on others, and in condemning those who decline to receive them.—To a firm and friendly statement of any differences of opinion, no reflecting person can object. The spirit of charity and meekness is in no way violated by such a conduct. On the contrary, every humble Christian is glad to obtain further information, to relinquish a tenet which is proved to be erroneous, to compare his sentiments with those of others, and thus to aim at “growth in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Even ardor and zeal in the defence of what we conceive to be essential truth, are entitled to our commendation. But where we ob-

serve a censorious dogmatical spirit, which will listen to no arguments, however temperately stated, and which demands implicit acquiescence, and this in young and evidently uninformed characters, it is impossible not to lament the wide and essential difference. It has accordingly appeared to me, that no mark more clearly designates this crude and unscriptural system, than the bitterness and self-conceit which force themselves upon our notice. I fully admit that there are many eminent Christians, who, though they have in some measure adopted the sentiments I am now reviewing, exhibit the utmost humility and charity in their spirit and conduct. But in the young and inexperienced, who have imbibed the opinions, without copying the graces of their teachers, I have myself almost uniformly seen a severe and unmeasured spirit of cavil. I have noticed a disregard of age, sex, and station in life. I have been distressed to perceive in them an incurable confidence, a superiority to instruction, a contempt of others, an incivility and coarseness of behavior, I will not say a vulgarity and indelicacy of language, which has utterly excluded any beneficial conversation when they have been present, and has converted what should have been the Christian intercourse of friends into a scene of angry and jarring disputation. It is not, indeed, wonderful that the contrite and lowly temper of our Redeemer should have forsaken those, who have departed from the simplicity of truth, in those very parts of it which are peculiarly calculated to produce the Christian spirit ; but I cannot but deeply regret this last feature of

the system, as it tends to case up the mind, to close it against conviction, and to prevent almost the hope of recovery. In fact, in some extreme cases which have fallen under my notice, I have seen, not only all disposition to improvement extinguished, but the very life and influence of religion gradually languish, a disputatious temper gain ground, a neglect first of ministerial and then of family duties prevail, till at last the deluded theorist either sunk into a mere form of godliness, or appeared openly to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

It is the full persuasion of the unscriptural tendency of the various sentiments which I have now stated to you, that has induced me to address you at this time. I hope I have not misrepresented the case. I am sure I have not intended to do so. I have written with real pain and reluctance; nor am I sanguine in my expectations of success. Those, indeed, who have thoroughly settled in this system, are commonly so entrenched on all hands by the unhappy thralldom of a short-sighted, but plausible hypothesis, and are so little sensible of the evident effect of their doctrines on themselves and others, that I should be backward at entering on the subject with them. There are others, again, of distinguished personal piety, who having early imbibed some of the views I have been considering, have neutralized the effects of them so completely by the fervent holiness of their spirit and character, as to render it doubtful whether any serious attempt should be made, to dislodge them in their advanced years from the ground they occupy. The persons whom I have

had chiefly in view are younger Christians and ministers, who rather admire and approve, than exactly understand and act upon, this perilous scheme of doctrine; and who are as yet accessible to calm and affectionate expostulation. Let me entreat of such to give this whole subject a renewed consideration. I doubt not but that their intentions at present may be excellent. They have been disgusted with the cold and worldly spirit of many Christians. They have thought, and thought rightly, that the grace and mercy of Christ have sometimes been too much obscured by human reason and human learning. They have, on the other hand, been warmed by the ardent zeal of some minister, or some private Christian who has maintained these sentiments. Perhaps the religious education they have received has had this tincture. I know the difficulty of rising above these impressions. Let me, however, beg such persons simply to ask themselves whether that comprehensive course of evangelical instruction, which, without neglecting any one part of Divine truth, insists chiefly, though not exclusively, on the doctrine of the cross, is not more evidently conformable with the general tenor of Scripture than the partial and narrow system which they have been led to favor. I might be satisfied with this appeal. I think no one can soberly admit the plain meaning of the word of God, and long maintain the disproportionate and incoherent theology I have endeavored to expose. But I would again entreat them to inquire whether, in every age of the church, the apostolic not excepted, there have not been some



individuals who have stood on their narrow ground, and who springing up in the church, especially at the time of a revival of religion, have soon afterwards dwindled into their native insignificance? Nay, I would ask, does not the corruption of the human heart lead us to expect such innovations? I am sure almost every Epistle of St. Paul treats largely of defections, on one side or the other, from the simplicity of the Gospel. But may I not, besides, confidently refer them to the best men whom the church has known in our own day, or in that of our fathers; to those whose labors have been most successful in the conversion of sinners, and who have themselves most adorned the name of Christ; as all taking, without exception, the broad and catholic ground of Christian instruction for which I have contended? May I not go further, and request the sincere inquirer after truth to compare the general effects of the one system of doctrine with those produced by the other, in the spirit and conduct of the mass of their respective adherents? I feel persuaded, that whoever candidly attends to these suggestions, will soon experience fresh views of truth opening on his mind. A conscientious and ardent Christian may easily be seduced for a time by a system which seems to promise greater spirituality, more love to Christ, and bolder acknowledgments of his grace—few young and affectionate hearts quite escape this snare—but as the character becomes more formed, the judgment better directed, the understanding more enriched with the various truths of Scripture, the experience of religion more enlarged by

sorrow and conflict, and the observation on what passes amongst those who profess the Gospel more extensive and matured, such persons gradually return into the plain and simple path which the real church of God in every age has trodden. The crude produce of the early summer yields to the rich and mellowed fruit of autumn. May I indulge the hope that, under the blessing of God, this may be the case with some who may read these lines? The gradual, but sure, improvement consequent on such an amelioration, will best attest the value of the change. All the grand principles of religion will remain the same, but the new and wise use to which they will be applied, and the various other doctrines which will invigorate and direct them, will add stability and consistency to every thing pure and holy in the character, whilst they tend to correct what is amiss, and supply what is defective. Every truth will assume a better tone, because it will be considered in a more just light. Something may at first be lost in sensible comfort, but this will be more than compensated by a growth in solid peace and joy. The love of Christ will be the prevailing principle of the conduct; and this will not be weakened, but increased, by the new motives which are given for its exercise, and the new topics on which it will operate. Instead of those fervid emotions in which their religion had too exclusively consisted, a real advance in all the parts of Christian knowledge, in faith, in love, and in holy obedience will take place. Their former vanity or arrogance will be exchanged for child-like docility. Their general spirit towards others, will less resemble the warmth

of a partisan, and partake more of genuine charity. Their usefulness in the world will be abundantly augmented by the discovery of new fields for exertion, as well as by the application of new principles of conduct. They will not be perfect, but they will be what they were not before, consistent, humble, advancing Christians. Their reliance on Divine grace will be a more pure and practical principle; and they will, ere long, look back on their former hasty judgment, and inaccurate notions, with the regret of one who was unhappily betrayed into an intemperance of which he did not know the evil, and who mistook the conclusions of human pride and infirmity, for the dictates of the unerring oracles of God. D. W.

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*Some Reflections on the present state of the Jews.*

**T**HERE are, perhaps, none of the prophecies of the Scriptures, which remain unfulfilled, more interesting to the church of God, than those which respect the Jews. "Beloved for the fathers' sakes," they are always regarded in the covenant faithfulness of God, and though excluded for a season from the privileges of his visible people, their judicial blindness will ultimately be removed, and they be restored like the penitent prodigal to the highest favor of their heavenly Father. From the days of Abraham to the present time, all the great events of divine Providence respecting the church of God have been most intimately connected with his dispensations towards that people. As Christ the Head of the church is of the

seed of Abraham according to the flesh, as the holy apostles and prophets are from the same high origin, and as this people are connected with the kingdom of grace by an everlasting covenant, it may naturally be supposed that these must ever occupy a primary and prominent station, both in the church on earth and in the church in heaven. Though the apostles seem to have had, to say the least, a painful presentiment of the obstinate unbelief and long rejection of their countrymen, they always discover the highest solicitude for their saving conviction of the truth, that they might know and love the divine Messiah, and be partakers of his holy salvation. While their unreasonable unbelief produced the greatest cause of discouragement, and their obstinate hostility would have excited in ordinary minds the highest irritation, the faithful apostles were ever ready to say, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

We can have little reason to expect a high degree of prosperity to attend the Christian church, when they feel an indifference to the state of the Jews. The feeling of the Christian, who is regardless of the standing of his elder brother of the seed of Jacob, is well described by the apostle Paul, "Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in." To which he answers with great energy, "Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." Our standing is equally critical with theirs. We rest upon the same mercy and forbearance of God. A forbearance which will cease when too long disre-

garded and abused. The Christian then who is duly sensible of his own standing, who feels that he is grafted upon the olive tree from which the Jew was broken, and broken for unbelief, will most sensibly feel and deeply lament the spiritual blindness of his fellow, from which he himself is exempt through the sovereign mercy of God alone. It will then be his heart's desire and continual prayer to God that Israel may be saved.

The Christian believer, who takes an enlarged view of the interests of Zion, will perceive from the testimonies of God that his grace will never have its fullest display in behalf of the church, till the people of his ancient covenant shall have been restored to the favor of his love, till they shall have looked with mourning penitence on him whom they have long pierced, and till they shall have become cordially united with their Gentile brethren, in one fold, under one divine Shepherd. Those then who watch and long for Zion's prosperity, for the richest exhibition of the Saviour's glory in the holy triumphs of salvation, will never cease to plead the faithfulness of God in the merciful remembrance of Abraham his friend, of Jacob his servant, of Moses, and Samuel, and the prophets, and of their afflicted blinded offspring. In presenting their supplications to God the believer does it not without hope, knowing that he has assured his ancient people in behalf of their most distant posterity, "If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring

thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers."

The general indifference manifested by the Christian world at the present day to the condition of the afflicted Jews, is undoubtedly, one of its greatest errors. While great exertions are making to convey the tidings of the gospel and the means of grace to the destitute, of all countries, the seed of Jacob are in a great measure, forgotten. They are not to be brought in without the ordinary means, any more than the pagans: and, certainly, we have no more right to say that the time of their conversion to Christ is yet distant, than of the pagan tribes of the Gentiles. God regards the people of his ancient promise with affectionate love; and though he chastens them in his holy judgments, he will not suffer them to be afflicted by their enemies without the manifest tokens of his displeasure. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." The divine declaration respecting Moab and Ammon, in consequence of their abuse of Israel, is peculiarly striking. "An Ammorite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor, to curse thee." It is worthy of remark that all the ancient



conquerors who made war upon the Jews came to an untimely, or a most miserable end. The apostles of Christ were successful in establishing the Christian church among the Gentiles ; but they did not attempt it till after the most painful, laborious, and persevering exertions with their own countrymen, nor till the last efforts seemed to have been made to bring the first-born son to accept of the sacred heritage provided by the divine Immanuel.

The Christian church, in every age, has been laboring and praying for the conversion of the Jews. In some periods, the importance of this object has been much more highly estimated than in others. The present is distinguished for a great indifference to the heirs of promise. Excepting the limited efforts of a Society in London, established for that purpose, very little is done, in this day so eminent for Christian enterprise, in behalf of the spiritual interests of the most ancient, the most venerable people existing on earth.

The popular sentiment respecting the moral state of the Jews is, in many respects, incorrect. Although the greater part of that people have been sunk in the most obstinate infidelity and degraded vices, ever since their last dispersion, forty years after the crucifixion of Christ ; there have always been among them men of talents and enterprise, men of learning and study, who have never been unmindful of the great question, whether Jesus of Nazareth were the true Messiah. In various periods there has appeared much reason to conclude that they were about soon to bow to the overwhelming evidence in his favor ; when the artful and persevering ex-

ertions of the obstinate and wicked, enforced by all the prospects of favor and terror, have succeeded in retaining their countrymen in the bondage of error. Though the number of Jews converted to the Christian faith has always been small, still no age has passed in which there have not been some trophies of God's victorious grace, who have embraced the divine Nazarene as their only hope. The idea generally prevalent respecting this afflicted people, that they are in a state of universal unfeeling stupidity, insensible of their condition and of their treatment of Jesus of Nazareth, believed by Christians to be the true cause of the terrible judgments with which they are afflicted, may be shown to be erroneous, by a recurrence to innumerable events which have taken place in the different periods of their history. But one event of this kind will now be noticed, which is of a general council of the Jews held more than a century and an half ago. Other councils have since been held, and repeated attempts have been made to convene public councils, with a view of considering the great question between them and the Christians, which, through the devices of the wicked, have generally failed of any favorable issue. The expedient usually adopted is to prevent the question, whether Jesus be the Messiah, from coming into discussion. The question is so clear, that they well know the danger of its being candidly canvassed. But the very exertions, that the more wicked part of the nation are thus compelled constantly to make, show the susceptibility of many of their brethren, and affords a just conclusion that they are not forgotten in the rich-

es of divine mercy. The succeeding account of a great council of the Jews in Hungary, in the year 1650, is selected; because I find no mention of any one since that time so large and respectable. The account is taken from the eleventh volume of the *Modern Universal History*, and has the most satisfactory evidence of authenticity. In view of these things, the Christian will find abundant encouragement to labor and pray that Israel may be saved.

Having taken notice of some Edicts of the government of Hungary, by which the Jews were deprived of certain privileges which they had previously enjoyed, the historian proceeds :

“Notwithstanding this restriction, the Jews made choice of this kingdom, preferably to all other countries, to hold their grand council, anno 1650, in which was to be debated the most important point of their religion; namely, whether the Messiah was come. The Jews being in doubt about the great number of centuries which have elapsed since the time in which they expected him to appear, agreed to call a general assembly of all their rabbies, to clear up that point. Hungary appeared to them a proper place, because the Turkish wars had in a great measure depopulated it : and they made choice of the Plain of Ageda, about thirty leagues from Buda, and the princes then at war readily granted them that liberty. Three hundred of their most learned rabbies, out of different nations, met there accordingly, with a vast multitude of other Jews, who flocked thither from different coun-

tries. They all encamped under their tents : and one, larger than all the rest, was reared for the grand council to sit in ; and R. Zachariah, of the tribe of Levi, was chosen their president and speaker. He was seated before a large table, with his face towards the eastern door of the pavilion, and all the rest sat round him.

“The first day was spent in compliments and mutual congratulations, and in excluding those who could not prove their Jewish origin, the number of whom amounted to about five or six hundred. On the second day the president proposed the question, in words to this effect : “We are here met to examine whether the Messiah is come, or whether we must still wait for his coming ?” Some professed themselves inclined to believe, he was already come, seeing those great misfortunes and disasters which Providence had continued to send down amongst them, during such a series of centuries, could not be owing to their idolatry ; a crime from which their nation had kept themselves wholly free, ever since their return from the Babylonish captivity : so that all those miseries which they had suffered since their dispersion, must be owing to some other cause. But the majority of votes carried it against them. It was agreed that the Messiah was not yet come, and that his delay was owing to their sins and impenitence.

“They next debated in what manner the Messiah was to come ; and easily agreed to these three particulars. 1st. That he would appear as a great conqueror, and deliver them from all foreign yoke. 2dly, That he would alter nothing in the Mosaic religion. And 3dly, That he

was to be born of a virgin; and that this his miraculous birth was to be a characteristic by which he should be known to those who were strangers to the covenant. They debated, among other points, whether Jesus Christ, who had been crucified, might not be the Messiah; to which the Pharisees, who overruled the assembly, answered on the following day, that he could not be that person, because he appeared in a low and despised state; whereas the Messiah was to appear in a glorious and triumphant manner. They likewise objected his being the son of a carpenter, and the aversion he had all along shewn against the law of Moses.

"Here a rabbi, named Abraham, who was still unsatisfied with the Pharisaic reasoning, strenuously insisted upon Christ's miracles; and asked them, by what power they thought he could work them? To this Zebedee, one of the chiefs of that sect, answered, that he wrought them by his magic art. Abraham objected, that no magic art could give sight, hearing, or speech, to those that were born blind, deaf, or dumb; to which the other replied, that those blind, deaf, and dumb, had been so formed in the womb by magic art; and that he that cured them did nothing else but dissolve the charm by the same diabolical power. The Sadducees, though in other things so opposite to them, agreed with them in this; and the more

readily, as they denied the resurrection, which Christ had so strenuously defended against them.

"The congress had lasted six days, when some ecclesiastics, sent thither from Rome, presented themselves before it; and not content to prove to them that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, began to extol the worship, ceremonies, and the authority of the church, whose head was the vicar of that divine person. This declaration immediately caused a strange uproar in the council, among which nothing was now to be heard but a tumultuous outcry of "No Christ! no God-man! no intercession of saints! no worship of images! no prayers to the Virgin!" accompanied with loud clamours, rending of cloaths, stopping of ears, &c. and in this manner they parted for that day. On the next, which was the 8th, they only met to agree upon another council, which should be held three years after in Syria, where, our author tells us, there are still some of the ancient Rechabites. He farther observes, that some of the Jewish doctors owned themselves not a little shaken at what had passed, and expressed a desire to converse with some protestant divines; but that the presence of so many monks, they said, deterred them, and made them fear some tragical conclusion to their assembly."

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

*A Narrative of the state of Religion within the bounds of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and of the General Associations of Con-*  
VOL. VIII. NO. 8.

*necticut, of New Hampshire, of Massachusetts Proper, and of the General Convention of Vermont, during the last year.*

P p



THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

IN laying before their beloved people as accurate an account as they could obtain of the state of religion in their Congregations during the year past, rejoice to have it in their power to announce that the gracious footsteps of the Lord have not ceased to be visible in the midst of them. From the reports, submitted by the several Presbyteries, it appears, that although causes of deep humiliation undoubtedly exist, true religion and sound morals, are on the whole making a very gratifying progress. Infidelity has become insignificant, both in the numbers and talents of those who affect it. Vices, hitherto dominating, have been, in many places, successfully encountered by the efforts of the friends of Godliness. The destructive sin of intemperance, against which the zealous labors of the church and the influence of all good citizens have been of late with peculiar energy directed, does not exhibit itself to its former extent of atrocity and shamelessness. Order, harmony, peace, correct principles, steadfastness in the faith, ministerial fidelity, and a decent and serious attention to public worship and divine ordinances on the part of the people, generally prevail. Few, or none, of those dissensions have occurred which present a threatening aspect to the prosperity of Zion. No dangerous, or even important error is apprehended to exist. The missionary has carried the gospel to destitute thousands, breaking to them the bread of life, and refreshing them in the wilderness

with the waters of eternal consolation. New congregations have been formed in various parts of our country. In some distant sections of our ecclesiastical community, where the stated means of grace have not hitherto been enjoyed, there is a prospect of a numerous and speedy accession of ministers.—The additions to the communions are, in many congregations, very large; in almost all considerable; and of these, the Assembly are happy to be informed by several of their southern Presbyteries, are numbers of the African race. The assembly desirous of improving the opportunity which this information affords them, claim the religious attention of their ministers and elders to this class of people whose immortal concerns are too apt to be neglected by those very persons for whose ease and affluence they toil.

Revivals, to a greater or less extent, have occurred in various portions of our church. In the towns of Rahway and Woodbridge, in the Presbytery of Jersey, unusually great additions have been made to the communion; a very lively interest has been exerted with reference to eternal concerns, and much done towards promoting the Redeemer's cause. This is the more worthy of notice inasmuch as a lamentable indifference is known previously to have existed in those towns. A revival of importance has occurred in the Second Congregation of Wilmington, in the Presbytery of Newcastle, a fact connected with which, the Assembly deem it proper to mention for the encouragement of their people.—There had been a society for prayer, whose meetings began to be neglected to such a degree as to threaten its dissolu-

tion. Its discouraged friends talked of this as an event near at hand. Through the restraining providence of God, however, it was not dissolved. Circumstances soon occurred, which under the administration of the Spirit, renewed the face of the congregation; and in a few short months, *instead of a single society, wasted and feeble, and about to expire, arose four societies, "servent in spirit, serving the Lord;" "quickened to call upon his name;"* wrestling like Jacob for his blessing, and like Israel prevailing to obtain it. True was the expression of the brother relating this fact, "the darkest hour is *that* nearest daylight."

It were to be wished, that the Assembly could perceive, in a more general amelioration of manners and habits, that improvement of the dispensations of Almighty God which he expects and mankind are obligated to exhibit. The judgments of pestilence and war, have carried their desolations over a large portion of our land; wringing the widow's heart, and dimming the eye of the fatherless. Infelicities of a diversified character, have followed in their train. Reversed fortunes, and defeated hopes, have not been wanting to tell men that, "they build too low, who build beneath the skies." But men do not know; neither will they consider. The effects of these judgments, have been different on minds of two opposite classes. Nor will it be a matter of surprise to any who are acquainted, on the one hand, with the workings of the gracious principle, or apprized, on the other, of the force of depravity and the callousness of the heart, to learn that, while the real christian has

been confirmed and made better by the visitations of God, the alien from the commonwealth of Israel, the man of earth, the unbelieving servant of the corruption which is in the world, through lust, has regarded them with indifference, or barred the avenues of sensibility against the admission of their monitory call. Hence, to the pleasing representation of things given above, the Assembly are constrained to acknowledge some unhappy exceptions. Intemperance, although it should seem, on the decline, still disfigures the moral aspect of society. In too many parts of our country, the violation of the Christian Sabbath calls as loudly upon the believer to oppose to it, his influence, his admonition and his prayers, as if nothing had yet been done. The rancorous hostility of political party, preys upon domestic and social peace, and indisposes men to admit the kindly influences of religious love. The spirit of the world struggles successfully for dominion. And, in a word, many humbling facts present themselves, to urge pious people to the throne of grace, that they may supplicate a more copious effusion of the enlivening and converting spirit.

The reports made by the Delegates from the General Associations of Connecticut, New-Hampshire, and Massachusetts Proper, and the General Convention of Vermont, afford very exhilarating intelligence; resembling, in its prominent features, *that* submitted by the Presbyteries. In Connecticut and Massachusetts Proper, revivals of magnitude meet the inquiries of the Assembly and establish the Lord's claim to the gratitude of his believing people.

In the first mentioned of these associations, the most laudable exertions are made towards the furtherance of foreign missions. From the other, the Assembly are pleased to learn, that certain errors of a pernicious character infesting that district of country for a length of time have ceased to advance, if they have not been driven back from their threatening position. Young Ministers, sound in the faith, have been settled of late in many congregations esteemed hitherto to be disinclined towards correct principles. New-Hampshire and Vermont, also, have been partially visited; the former, more especially in the town of Haverhill, the inhabitants which had long been without a settled Minister and careless of possessing the privileges and ordinances of the gospel.

The Assembly would do injustice to the subject, were they not to advert more particularly for the instruction and counselling of their churches, to certain facts and circumstances which they consider both as instruments and evidences of a progressive work of grace, extending itself through the past year.

The social principle is mighty in its operations. It constitutes a powerful law of our nature. When sanctified by religion, and consecrated to the immediate service of God, what results of high import and holy advantage, may not be expected from it? Growing out of this principle, a multitude of associations of a pious and benevolent nature have spread themselves through the churches under the Assembly's care, as well as those with which we are in ecclesiastical connection in the eastern states. The practice of uni-

ting the talents, influence, and resources of individuals, by these hallowed bonds and for these religious, moral, and charitable purposes, is not novel. It has been more than once, before this, announced to exist among our people. But it would seem that at no former period, has it been pursued with such vigor, extension, and success, as recently. The spirit in which it originated, is more actively at work than ever, and diffuses itself far and wide. Christian women—the mothers and sisters in Israel—the daughters of Jerusalem—mingling with the softest sensibilities of nature, the holy refinements of a gracious heart—minister of their substance to the Lord Jesus—serve *him* by serving his poor—and rival, where they do not surpass their brethren in instituting and maintaining societies promotive of the interest of his Divine Religion. It would be difficult to number the associations of these virtuous and praise-worthy women, formed, some, for contributing to the education of poor and pious youth for the office of the Holy Ministry; others, for the distribution of Bibles; others, for instructing the ignorant of adult age to read, in order that the word of God may be brought nigh unto them; and others, again, for supplying the pressing wants, and alleviating the bodily diseases of the indigent sufferer.

To the benefits derived from those institutions which have been denominated moral associations, the Assembly bear their willing testimony. Abundant evidence has been furnished of their success in repressing audacious vice and producing a degree, at least, of external reformation. *Sobriety* has obviously been promoted by them;



and rigidly discountenanced by them, proflateness has grown into disrepute.

Bible Societies, forming a most important feature of the religious character of the times, are multiplying daily. Scarcely can there be discovered, any considerable portion of settled country in these states where some association of this kind is not either organized or about to be organized. Words are wanting to express the inestimable value of these societies, which, by putting the book of life into the hands of the needy, enrich them with heavenly treasures; and which, embodying, so to speak, the zeal of all Christian denominations, and knitting to each other persons, who, however they may differ on many points of greater or of minor importance, agree in affirming the word of God to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, neutralize the asperity of the bigot and the sectarian, and reconcile the contending members of the same brotherhood. The tendency of Bible Societies to produce this auspicious result, is not now a matter of experiment: facts have ascertained it.

Justice, and the praise due to preserving piety, forbid the Assembly to pass unnoticed the continued labors of one particular institution; viz. The Evangelical Society of Philadelphia for the instruction of poor children; the members of which have during the past year, had under their care about one thousand children of this description. More than one of these have proved to be little brands plucked from the burning, and have manifested, in death, the blessed fruits of that sacred sympathy which brought

them out of darkness into light, and from the power of satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Praying Societies constitute another particular worthy of observation in detailing the religious character of the past year. Not that their origin is of a date thus modern. They have long subsisted in certain parts of our church. But of late years, they have been multiplied; and since the narrative rendered by the last assembly, their number has been very considerably augmented, and their influence in quickening the zeal of the pious and converting those that are without, singularly attested. For all "the spiritual blessings which are in heavenly" things and places "in Jesus Christ" God will be enquired of. Wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, they have his promise that he will be with them; and never is the Holy Spirit refused to those who, with contrite hearts and humble faith, implore his fellowship. Christian love is excited and cherished, and a reciprocity of encouraging and fortifying motives created, by what the assembly may be permitted to call, a common consciousness of the common wants, desires, and weakness. Heart springs to heart. A full tide of mingled affection sets in towards Him from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent take it by force."

The assembly have reserved for the conclusion of their narrative some particulars of information at once highly important and uncommonly gratifying. They relate to the revivals with which it has pleased God to favor several of the

most distinguished seminaries of learning in the United States of America; indistinct intimations of which it is not doubted, many of their people have received.

Divine impressions have been made upon the minds of a number of the youth of Hamden Sydney College, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Hanover. In several of the subjects of these impressions, it is believed, a saving change has been effected; while their influence is visible in stamping a religious solemnity on the face of the institution generally.

Dartmouth College in New-Hampshire, has been favored with lively tokens of the Divine presence. Within the space of a very few weeks, many of its youth have been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and have returned unto the Lord their rest. Many more have been excited to serious reflection. And of one hundred and forty students, but one, it is stated, remains unimpressed; while at the same time a number of the younger inhabitants of the town in which the college is situated, share the precious effusion.

Passing on from this institution, to Middlebury college in Vermont, the Assembly behold *there also*, the footsteps of the reviving Spirit. A number of the youth of Middlebury, have become serious Christians—trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord—that he may be glorified.

Retracing their steps, the Assembly find their attention called to operations of greater extent, in Yale College in Connecticut. In the progress of God's gracious visit to this seat of learning, "the whole college," to use the emphatical description of the delegate reporting on the subject, "was

shaken as the trees of a wood are shaken by a mighty wind. "As many as fifty," he states, "have given evidence of having passed from death unto life. A considerable number of these belong to Virginia, and the states farther south."

"The ways of the Lord are right"—they are wise—they are holy—they are gracious—they are admirable—and "sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Intelligence of the interesting scenes which were taking place at Princeton, is said to have been one important means of quickening the church to prayer and religious conversation previous to any favorable appearances in Yale College.

The Assembly, therefore, returning towards the centre of their ecclesiastical concerns, recognize with gratitude God's gracious work in the college of New Jersey. From the report of the president of this seminary, to the Board of Trustees, which report has been read to the assembly, it is learnt that "a majority of the students now in the college may be viewed as hopefully pious;" and that "a large proportion of the residue appear to possess much tenderness of conscience, and show a very desirable regard to religious duties and obligations." Among the causes which have been made effectual of this blessed revolution in the spiritual state of Nassau Hall, three have been presented which the Assembly deem it useful to mention, for the sake, especially, of such of their people as may be concerned in the care of our precious youth:—1st. The study of the holy Scriptures; accompanied with comments on the portion read, and a practical application of the leading truths

contained in it. 2nd. Moral discipline, vigorously and vigilantly maintained. 3d. The few pious youth who were members of college before the revival, as a leaven leavening the whole mass. The subjects of this revival are of a diversity of religious denominations, great care having been used to avoid, both an excluding and a proselyting spirit. It has occasioned no remission of the ordinary pursuits of literature and science; but on the contrary has had a friendly bearing upon them. No influence from the quarter of authority has been introduced to force any of the youth into a participation of the extraordinary exercises which took place. But the Assembly forbear to enlarge.

It is scarcely possible to light upon subjects of more deep and lively interest to the soul that sincerely loves the Redeemer and his cause, than the scenes which have now passed in review before the churches. The strength and wealth of the kingdom of Christ on earth, are found in its youth of promise. Here then, are, at least, a hundred and thirty young Christians, to be sent abroad into the world from the bosom of sanctified science, to go forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Here are the hopes of Zion bred in the nurseries of learning and of piety. "Here is a verification of the oracle, 'the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.'" And here are the fountains whose streams, confluent, and yet pellucid, smooth, and noiseless, make glad the city of our God. May the propitious influence of these revivals extend with rapidity to every seminary

in the republic; that the schools of the prophets may never cease to be fed from the halls of science and the liberal arts!

In the view of all the facts and details which have been related, the Assembly offer their congratulations to the friends of Zion and to those who have prayed for the peace of Jerusalem. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early." "God is known in her palaces for a refuge." "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

Published by order of the General Assembly.

Attest,

JACOB J. JANEWAY,  
Stated Clerk.

Philadelphia, May, 1815.

*The following interesting extracts are from a communication lately received by a Gentleman in Philadelphia, from a highly respectable correspondent in London, and forwarded for publication in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.* Eds.

"ALREADY have my feelings been expressed to you on the merciful interposition of a kind Provi-



dence in restoring peace ; and in reviewing this event I have been particularly struck with the confident expectation raised in your mind on the subject, when human appearances were unpromising, and that it should have been so soon realized ; but the expectation was well founded. The Lord delighteth in mercy, he hath made America a land of bibles, and of prayers, and Britain also ; and he hath not been entreated in vain. He raised up suitable instruments to engage in the work of negotiation ; and infused a better spirit into our councils towards a country which should be dear to every Christian ; a country where the glorious gospel is known and its power felt and exemplified. Little, my dear friend, do the unthinking part of mankind know how much they are indebted to Christian principles ; through their happy influence peace flows not only to the individual in whose breast they reign, to the circle in which he moves, to the nation where he dwells ; but eventually it shall flow to the world at large. Already have our respective countries been brought to dwell together in unity, and feel a deep conviction that it is to these sacred and holy principles, under divine Providence, we are indebted for the happy restoration of peace. What new obligations are we laid under, to engage with fresh vigor, heart and hand in the dissemination of that holy book which contains the glad tidings of salvation to the human race ? New facilities will now be afforded, and an increased responsibility will be connected with them. How extensive the sphere of action,—nothing less than the world ; and how encouraging the promise, “ I will give the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.”

“ THE Anniversary Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society was held on the 3d (May,) and it was a day peculiarly interesting. A deeper impression than ever appears to be felt of the vast import-

ance of the object ; and the funds of the Society are still increasing. The report is not yet published, but you will find at foot hereof a note of the amount received by the Society the past year, by which the great utility of Auxiliary Societies and Bible Associations is very conspicuous ; in fact, those measures which create an interest with the multitude, and desire to aid, by small weekly contributions, in promoting the object, promise to give it a most efficient and permanent character ; you will therefore excuse an occasional repetition of this hint.

“ Lord Gambier was present as usual at the anniversary, and gave vent to his feelings partly in these impressive words : ‘ It is the joy and rejoicing of my heart to give aid to this glorious object, when I see the good that is flowing from it in enlightening the world, and bringing on a brighter day ; these days are indeed days of spiritual feasting, our souls are satisfied as it were with marrow and fatness.’

“ From Russia the intelligence is highly gratifying, Prince Galitzin, the President of the Petersburg Society takes the most lively interest in the object, and has lately written to Lord Teignmouth a letter evidencing the possession of a heart animated by Christian principles, and glowing with zeal for the best interest, not only of Russia, but of all the pagan and Mahometan countries on its borders. It appears that the Russian peasantry bring in their roubles and copecks for the use of the Society with great cheerfulness ; and the Russian clergy stimulate them to the good work. Since the art of printing was known in Russia, now 260 years, there have been 22 editions of the Scriptures printed, and the whole number of copies was only 50,000. Scarcely two years have elapsed, I think, since the formation of the Petersburg Bible Society ; and already 80,000 copies have gone to press ; neither can they be supplied fast enough for the demand.

“ How animating the prospect that the time to favor Zion—the set time is fast approaching.”

*Report, 3d May 1815, British and Foreign Bible Society,*

Rec'd Annual Subscriptions,	£ 3272 10 6
Donations and life do	2429 9 11
Congregational Coll	4106 10 8
	7108 11 9
Legacies 1312 18 Divi-	
dends on Stock—	
1703 10	3016 8
Contri. from Auxiliary Societies, subject to a moiety in Bibles and Testaments	61,848 11 9
Sales of Bibles and Testaments, principally by Bible Associations	27,560 6 5
Reports, &c.	361 1 3
	£ 99,894 18 6
Sterling.	
Equal to \$	443,977 00

## LETTER FROM MR. NEWELL.

The following letter from Mr. NEWELL, to the Rev. Dr. MORSE, received via England, in May last, contains the latest intelligence from the Missionaries.

*Bombay, Aug. 2, 1814.*

Rev. and dear Sir,

OUR last communications to the Board will make you acquainted with the state of our affairs as far as the 10th of June. We sent a packet at that time for America, enclosed to J Smith, Esq London; we sent packets also on the 10th and 16th of April last. We write but few letters at this time, as it is not long since we wrote last, and opportunities will be frequent about this time.

You will doubtless see my journal and letters to Dr. Worcester, if they are received; I shall not therefore recapitulate here; but beg leave to refer you to those communications for an account of all I have seen, and done, and suffered, from the time I left America till

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my arrival in Bombay, which was in March last.

Nothing of importance has occurred since we wrote last. We still remain in the house assigned by the Governor to the brethren Hall and Nott, and no intimation, favorable or unfavorable, has been received from government. We have reason, however, from a variety of circumstances, to conclude, almost without the shadow of a doubt, that the government have long ago made up their minds not to trouble us any more; and that our continuance in our present habitation is to be considered rather as a favor than as a mark of the Governor's displeasure. We expect, however, at the close of the rains, which will be some time in October, to remove from our present residence, and to take a house a little way out of town, where it will be cheaper living than in the fort, and where we shall be more among the natives, and of course nearer our work.

The brethren Hall and Nott have been here about a year and a half, and have applied themselves principally to the study of the Mahratta, which is the vernacular language of this place. They hope soon to be able to commence preaching to the natives in their own tongue. I have been here only five months, and of course have only made a beginning in the Mahratta. During my stay in Ceylon I acquired some knowledge of the *Hindoostanee*, which I find of great use to me here. It serves as a good medium for acquiring the Mahratta. There are a great many words common to both languages; and besides, the *Hindoostanee* is very extensively spoken in Bombay.

Our principal studies besides the native languages are the *Greek and Hebrew Scriptures*, with such helps as we have at hand; which, by the way, are very scanty. We stand very much in need of commentaries and critical works. We expect that books are on the way for us. We have not yet received our box of books from Calcutta, which came by the Alligator.

Q q

While we are obliged to spend so much time in the laborious work of acquiring a foreign language, it is a circumstance which calls for gratitude, that we have all around us opportunities of immediate usefulness. There are hundreds of people in the place, Europeans, natives, and half-casts, as they are called, to whom we can speak in our own tongue.

We preach every Sabbath day in our house, and also at another place, a short distance from the town, and have in all about thirty persons to hear us. The number of our hearers is increasing every week, and we hope from these small beginnings great and lasting good may result to the inhabitants of this benighted region of the earth.

There is a military chaplain here, who is the only Protestant clergyman in the place. But few people, I believe, attend church. Twenty years ago the state of religion was not much better in Calcutta; but now how different! At present we have strong hopes that the Lord will shortly perform as great a work here as he has wrought in Calcutta; that he will soon have a people in this place; and that, from this central situation, the Gospel will spread into all the region round about us.

We have a weekly prayer-meeting on Wednesday evening, for the special object of praying for a revival of religion in this place. A number of our neighbors generally attend. On Tuesday mornings we observe the weekly concert of prayer, agreed upon and observed by all the missionaries in India of every denomination, for the extension of the Gospel throughout this land; and on the evening of the first Monday in each month we keep the monthly concert of prayer, established many years ago among all denominations of Christians in Europe, to pray for the universal spread of the Gospel. I do not recollect that this prayer meeting is observed in America. It is not the same as the *quarterly* prayer-meeting, observed in the vicinity of Boston.

Such, dear Sir, is our present situation, and such our hopes, prospects, employments, and means of usefulness. The study of the native tongues consumes the principal part of our time, and must for several years to come, for it is no easy task to make a foreign language our own, so as to speak in it with facility and accuracy.

We long for the arrival of more missionaries, to supply the numerous stations that remain unoccupied in this region. We three are the only missionaries on this side of India, except an Armenian brother at Surat, in the service of the Serampore brethren. Besides the whole extent of this coast, and the vast countries to the north of us, which are now unprovided for, there are at short distance to the west, the extensive and interesting countries of Persia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Armenia, and Palestine, where no Protestant missionary has ever yet penetrated. In Bombay, we have every facility for acquiring the languages of these countries, and ships are constantly passing between this place and the Persian gulf.

These countries are rendered peculiarly interesting and important by the following considerations; the New Testament has recently been translated into Persian, Arabic, and Turkish; and the Armenian Bible is now re-printing in Calcutta. Missionaries are therefore needed to go with these translations, and to call the attention of the people to the word of God. The Mahometan power is now evidently on the decline. There are in all parts of Western Asia, multitudes of Armenian, Georgian, Jacobite, and Syrian Christians, sunk indeed to the lowest degree of ignorance and formality, but still holding fast the Christian name in spite of the oppression and severity of their Mahometan masters. These people would, no doubt, receive with gratitude the attention of other Christians, if no attempt was made to proselyte them to a different persuasion. Schools might be erected for the instruction of their



children and youth, and the Bible distributed among them. The seed thus silently scattered would unavoidably take root and spring up, and a reformation would gradually take place among them, without alarming their fears or exciting opposition. What a noble field for the exertion of Bible and Missionary Societies! What a foundation for the extension of the Gospel in these countries!

Missionaries might be stationed in all the great towns from Bussora to Jerusalem, whose business at first might be simply to distribute Bibles among the Christians, and to erect schools for the instruction of their children. If they never did any thing more than to give a general circulation to the Bible, and learn the people to read it, they might be the instruments of incalculable good to a great body of professed Christians, who at present are little, if any better, than their Mahomedan neighbors.

I had nearly made up my mind to attempt something of this kind myself, at the time when I expected my brethren Hall and Nott would have been sent to England; and that I should consequently be left alone. But at present the prospect in India is so encouraging that perhaps it may be best to send all the missionaries you can spare to this country. We have just received the joyful intelligence of a general peace in Europe. In consequence of this it is highly probable that the ancient possessions of the Dutch, Danes, and French in India, will revert to their former owners. Should this be the case, we have reason to think that missionaries would find much easier access to this country than formerly. The Danes and Dutch, you know, have always manifested great zeal in the propagation of the Gospel among their heathen subjects. The French, we have reason to hope, would not oppose, and the example of these nations might provoke England to the same liberality. A great change for the better, we think, has already taken place, in the views and conduct of the rulers in this country with respect to the

propagation of the Gospel among the natives.

There are two places, which, if given up by the Company, it would be desirable to supply with missionaries as soon as possible. One is Pondicherry, and the other Cochin. The former is a good central place for a mission to the people speaking the Tamul language, a population of eight or nine millions. The old Danish mission at Tranquebar has been very much reduced by the death of their missionaries, and unless supplied with new missionaries from Europe, will soon become extinct. Cochin on the opposite coast is perhaps still more important. It opens a door to an uncultivated region, and in the neighborhood of this place are the Syrian Christians, who stand in great need of instruction, who would thankfully receive the instruction of prudent missionaries, if they did not attempt to withdraw them from their own church, and who might be made use of to immense advantage in spreading the Gospel in the south of India. On my voyage from Ceylon to this place I touched at Cochin, and from thence visited the Syrian Christians. I found among them none of that bigotry and jealousy, which characterizes the Church of Rome. They are indeed extremely ignorant, but they are willing to be instructed. They were about erecting two seminaries, in different parts of the country, for educating young men for the ministry. But they have none among them capable of teaching. I asked the priests, with whom I conversed, whether they would like to have a European come and reside among them, to assist them in educating their young men. They seemed to be sensible of the advantage of such a measure, and expressed the utmost readiness to receive such a person, but observed at the same time that their poverty could not allow them to make any compensation for such services. I felt a strong desire to continue with these people, and devote my life to their service, but I was afraid in the present state of things, I should not be able to get permission from gov-

ernment. How extensive is the missionary field in this country! How abundant the harvest! How few the laborers! May we not hope that you will soon add to our little number. We trust there is peace, before this time, between England and America, and that the intercourse between our country and this, will shortly be restored. If so, we shall expect to hear of the arrival of some of our brethren by the first opportunity.

We are anxious to get letters from America. We have received none since those by the Alligator. The money remitted to Mr. Harington has been duly received. I think it will last us through the present year.

I hope you will favor me with a letter in return for this. The letters of our friends at home are more valuable to us than ours can be to them. Dr. Worcester, I suppose will see this of course. I beg you would remember me to those who may inquire after me, particularly to Dr. Griffin and Dr. Holmes, and be so kind as to tell them I intend to write to them both by the next opportunity.

I remain, Reverend and dear Sir,  
yours affectionately,

S. NEWELL.

Rev. Dr. Morse.

#### MESSRS. NOTT AND HALL'S JOURNAL.

The following extracts from the Journals of Messrs. Nott and Hall, we present to our readers as containing interesting information.

#### COCHIN.

"THIS town is inhabited almost entirely by Dutch people. They amount to about twelve hundred. With but few exceptions they are extremely poor and without employment. They have no schools, either English or Dutch, except one in which an invalid sergeant, very imperfectly teaches a little English. The streets are full of sprightly children, who are growing up in the most deplorable igno-

rance, and with prospects truly gloomy to themselves and to the community. The people are earnestly desirous that schools should be established among them, but there are no suitable persons disposed to engage in this arduous and responsible work.

"They have a large church, but it is in a very decayed condition. A part of the pulpit and a part of the roof have fallen down. When the place was taken [by the English] this venerable building was converted for a time into a stable. Eight years ago their minister died. Since that time they have had no religious instruction, and as a natural consequence, many of them have turned Roman Catholics rather than lose entirely the name and appearance of religion.

"Their marriage ceremonies are performed sometimes by a clergyman occasionally present, sometimes by the commanding officer at that station, sometimes by a catholic, and sometimes by a Syrian priest.

"At funerals their church service is read by a Dutch gentleman, and baptisms though generally omitted, are sometimes performed by a clergyman who may happen to be in the place.

"Many of the inhabitants understand English sufficiently well to receive religious instruction in that language.

"Some of the people we heard bewailing the degraded state of religion, and at the same time expressing a desire that a missionary might be sent among them.

"At a former period the principal Dutch inhabitants waited on the chief magistrate, represented to him their situation, and prayed, that if possible he would obtain a minister for them. To effect this he made repeated attempts, but without success. Now the people know not what to attempt. They seem discouraged and ready to sit down in despair. How desirable that Christian liberality should send them that blessing which they both desire and so much need—a minister of the gospel! and who in the adjacent

country would have such an ample field.

"Nov. 2d, 1813. This day visited the catholic college at Verapoli; a place mentioned in Dr. Buchanan's Researches. The apostolic vicar, father Prosper, we did not see, but we were soon introduced to bishop Raymond, who addressed us in imperfect English. We asked him if he could converse in our language. He replied—"Drink one bottle claret, then speak English very well." From all that we saw and learnt of this bishop, the pope's apostolic vicar in Malabar, this speech may serve as a fair specimen of his character.

"There was one priest young and modest in his appearance, who lately arrived from Italy. He conducted us through the various apartments of the ecclesiastical buildings, which are very spacious and quite respectable.

"In the college are thirty-two students, twelve of whom are Syrian catholics, and pursue their studies and devotions in the Syrian language, without paying any attention to the Latin. The catholic and the Syrian catholic students have each a separate chapel, highly decorated with crucifixes, images, paintings, and flowers. In their school rooms they have a very few books, and those are sadly mutilated and defaced.

"We inquired for their public library; but they said that they had none at present, for the white ants had destroyed it. The magnificent public buildings are surrounded with the most miserable native huts. The people both from their appearance, and from a representation given by their bishop, are extremely poor and wretched. But none appeared more so than about twenty Catechemen, who had advanced as far as the third sacrament, which they were repeating on their knees. Some were male, some female, some very old, others very young, and some were shockingly meagre and decrepit. The bishop said their number of converts the last year was about five hundred.

"At Cranganore they have another college with about thirty Syrian students. The Syrio-catholic Christians, they say, amount to eighty thousand,\* and their churches to eighty. In the college at Verapoli each student is boarded at two rupees per month, and all other charges are defrayed from public funds. We made several inquiries of them about the Syrians, but could gain nothing satisfactory that was important. We had previously visited a catholic church at Vipine, which is across the river from Cochin. Here we noticed a peculiarity which we had observed nowhere else. Near the church stands a small building or chapel, dedicated to St. Mar, said to be the preserver of the sea. Here many of the people resort to pay their homage to the saint or god previously to their worship in the church.

"At Verapoli, as we were informed, they have a full sized image of St. John, which, on the 24th of June, they convey to the water and three times immerse. In this part of the country they erect, in front of each church, a flag staff, on which they display a sacred flag on their festival days.

"Wherever we go, we behold demonstrations of the unparalleled zeal and activity of the pope's apostles. How powerfully does their example reprove and reproach the supineness and sloth of the ministers of Jesus! These catholics went forth bearing all the pollutions and abominations of the papal beast, and unaided too by the converting or consoling Spirit of God, yet they have sustained labors, privations, and sufferings, almost to a miracle; they have demolished idols and their temples; baptized, in the name of Jesus, hundreds of thousands who once were pagans; and have erected churches from one extremity of India to the other. What then might not be done by the true ministers of the cross, bearing the pure word of life, aided by the prayers of the righteous,

\* *Twenty thousand of them are subject to the magistrate of Cochin.*



and the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

(To be continued.)

*Extract of Letters from the Rev. William R. Gould, Missionary from the Missionary Society of Connecticut to the State of Ohio, to the Secretary of the Society.*

Gallipolis, Gallia County, Ohio, April 24, 1815.

"IN many places where I have been, people have expressed their indebtedness to the Missionary Society of Connecticut. Every where, I have received such marks of attention as are due to the Missionary character. The moral wants of the people of this county are truly deplorable. Immorality every where abounds. Missionaries are wanted in this part of the State much more than in New Connecticut. I hope the attention of the Society will be directed towards the south and west sections of the State more than it has been.

"This town is truly a Missionary station. It was settled about twenty years ago, by a colony of French people consisting of about five hundred. They lived in barracks during the Indian war. Having purchased the land of ——— they found their title to be bad. Having been compensated in part for their losses by Congress a part moved away and part stayed. A third of the people are still French. The town declined till about ten years ago, when the Americans began to settle here and in the adjacent country. The number of inhabitants is now between three and four hundred, and the town is flourishing. It is a county town. There is an unfinished Court-house and Academy. The County contains about 5000 inhabitants, and the number is rapidly increasing.

"In this town there has never been any regular preaching. Perhaps not more than five or six sermons, from Presbyterian Ministers

have ever been heard here. There is no preaching by Presbyterians within forty miles. In the town there is no church, and very few professors of religion. You may judge of the state of morals. Since I have been here, I have been surprised that the people have given such attendance to the word as they have done. I hope the Lord has much people in this place. A religious society has been formed, a subscription is raised, and there is a small fund arising from ministerial lands. The people here request me to stay with them, at their expense, two thirds of the ensuing year, beginning on the 6th of March last, to which time I have sent you my missionary journal. The rest of the time, they expect me to missionate in the service of your Society. I shall stay with them for a time, and perhaps settle with them.

"I must beg to be excused for having overpassed the bounds of my Commission in a weeks excursion into the State of Virginia. Having heard of the deplorable state of society on the Great Kanhawa, by going there, I thought I should follow the spirit if not the words of my instructions. The western part of Virginia is a Missionary field worthy the attention of the Society. A few religious people are calling for help. Vice stalks with a most brazen front. I did not do so much as I intended, but endeavored to prepare the way to do more when I shall be able to visit them again."

Gallipolis, June 1, 1815.

"REV. SIR,

"IN my last I intimated a probability that I might settle at this place. It is indeed a missionary station of very considerable importance, of which I gave you some particulars. Though many of the prospects are painful and discouraging, I see no sufficient reason now why I should not comply with the earnest solicitations of this needy people. I feel that much good may be done here, and it was for that purpose I became your missionary.

With the aid of the Rev. Mr. Lindly of Athens, I expect, a week from next Sabbath, to form a church here, and administer the ordinances. And if I am placed here, I calculate to be installed by the first of August.

"I expect soon to make a short tour to the west part of the state. I wish the good people of Connecticut were perfectly acquainted with the moral darkness of this part of the world. Prayers would not be spared—corresponding exertions would not be spared. We want many more missionaries. You will remember that between here and Cincinnati, 250 miles, there is but one Presbyterian Minister. Though preachers are found in abundance, the most of them are pictures of ignorance, folly, and extravagance, and if the gospel is preached at all, it is so mingled with error, that it is difficult to say whether the more good or evil is produced."

## ORDINATIONS.

AT Newburyport, Mass. on the 21st June last the missionaries, the Rev. SAMUEL J. MILLS, JAMES RICHARDS, JUN. EDWARD WARREN, BENJAMIN C. MEIGS, HORATIO BARDWELL, and DANIEL POOR.

As the particulars of the ordination must be interesting to all the friends of missions, we are induced to make a minute statement.

The examination was attended at nine o'clock, in the vestry of Dr. Dana's church. At eleven o'clock, the council, with the missionaries, and those who attended the examination, removed to the church, where a numerous audience had assembled to witness the solemnities of the ordination.

The services were commenced with an appropriate anthem from the words, "Arise, shine, O Zion," &c. The introductory prayer was then made by the Rev. Dr. Morse, of Charlestown, and the direction and blessing of God implored in the solemn services of setting the missionaries apart to their benevolent

work. After the performance of another piece of sacred music, the Rev. Dr. Worcester, of Salem, preached the sermon, from Acts xvii 16. *Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.* He examined the opinion entertained by Paul respecting the morality of the Athenians, and the influence which the opinion of the apostle had on his ministerial conduct. The sermon, though very long, and though, on account of the immense concourse, heard with difficulty in some parts of the assembly, was listened to, throughout, with patient and earnest attention, and excited deep interest in the closing address to the missionaries. The consecrating prayer was made by the Rev. Dr. Spring, of Newburyport. The charge to the missionaries was given by the Rev. Dr. Dana, of Newburyport. The right hand of fellowship was given by the Rev. Justin Edwards, of Andover. A liberal collection was then made for the benefit of the mission. The services were concluded by a fervent address to the throne of grace by the Rev. Edward Payson, of Portland.

After a recess of half an hour, the house of worship (the largest in the Commonwealth) was again filled. The communicants from different and distant churches, to the number of nearly seven hundred, who had assembled on this interesting occasion, were seated together in the body pews, and apparently with one heart and one soul celebrated the Lord's supper. The communion services were introduced with an address to the communicants by the Rev. Dr. Dana, of Newburyport. The first prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Parish, of Byfield, and the second by the Rev. Professor Stuart. During the distribution of the elements by ten deacons of different churches, who had been designated for the service, the aged and venerable Mr. Morrison, of Londonderry, N. H. addressed the communicants. The solemnities were closed with an address and prayer by the Rev. Dr. Payson of Rindge, N. H. and the

following hymn of Watts, sung by a great number of the communicants.

*How sweet and awful is the place,  
With Christ within the doors, &c.*

The scene was novel in this country, and was uncommonly solemn and affecting. To many we trust, it was a season of sweet communion with their ascended Saviour, and long to be remembered with gratitude. The view of so many communicants, assembled from various and distant churches, united in so solemn an act of fellowship, never to partake this feast together again on earth, brought impressively before the eye of faith the scenes of a future and invisible world; and to the humble believer, imparted some pleasing foretaste of the future fellowship of the redeemed around the throne of God and the Lamb.

On Wednesday the 28th of June last, the Rev. JONATHAN LEE, was ordained to the pastoral care of the Church and Society in Otis, (Mass.) The Rev. Mr. White of Sandisfield, made the introductory prayer; the Rev. Mr. Lee, of Colebrook, preached the Sermon;

the Rev. Mr. Kinne, of Alford, made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. Mr. Catlin, of New Marlborough, gave the charge; the Rev. Mr. Keep, of Blanford, gave the Right hand of fellowship; and the Rev. Mr. Harrison, of Tolland, (Mass.) made the concluding prayer. The happy settlement of the Gospel ministry, for the first time, in this waste place of our Jerusalem, with very favorable prospects—manifests the commendable exertions of the Society—was highly gratifying to the Ecclesiastical Council, and a very numerous audience collected on the occasion.

On Wednesday, the 19th ult. the Rev. AMMI LINSLEY, was ordained to the pastoral care of the first Church and society in Hartland. The Rev. Mr. Flint, of Hartford, made the introductory prayer; the Rev. Mr. Pinneo of Milford, preached from 1 Thes. ii. 4.; the Rev. Mr. Prudden, of Enfield, made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. Mr. Gaylord, of West-Hartland, gave the charge; the Rev. Mr. Baker, of Granville, gave the right hand of fellowship; and the Rev. Mr. McLean, of Simsbury, made the concluding prayer.

#### *Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.*

1815.

July 5.	From the Rev. John Seward, collected in new settlements,	- - - - -	\$ 16 50
14.	From Rev. William Williams,	do. do.	39 14
	From Rev. Holland Weeks, a donation,	- - -	8 00
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			\$ 63 64